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What We've Learned So Far From Tracking Student Visa Data

More than 1,500 students from nearly 250 colleges have had their visas revoked, but who they are—and why they've been targeted—is still largely unknown.

By Ashley Mowreader

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On April 7, amid reports that the federal government was detaining international students and revoking their visas, *Inside Higher Ed* began collecting and cross-checking data in an effort to track

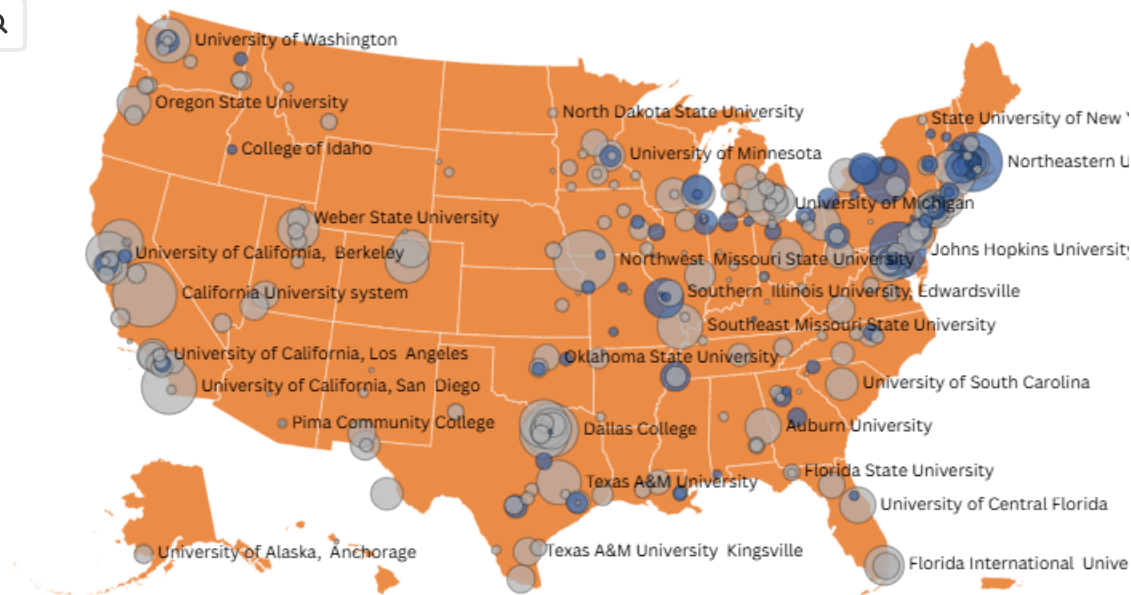
exactly how many students were affected, and at which institutions. Our goal was to understand the

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Over the past two weeks, more than 1,500 students—representing several hundred colleges and universities, as well as state systems—have had a sudden or unexpected change in their Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) listing, or their F-1 or J-1 visa status.

Public Private



Source: [Inside Higher Ed analysis](#), [Ashley Mowreader/Inside Higher Ed](#), [Anika Arora Seth](#) • Some institutions have shared publicly that students have lost visas but have yet to disclose the number of students impacted. These are documented on the map, but the number is unknown.

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* A Flourish map

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Where Students Have Had Their Visas Revoked

The data we've gathered provides a snapshot of how the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security are acting on President Trump's campaign promise to remove international students who engage in political activism or disrupt campus operations. But it also reveals some details about the students themselves.

Here's what we know so far.

1. Our data set is growing, but still lacking.

When the map launched April 7, we identified 147 students, but that number quickly surpassed the figure Secretary of State Marco Rubio cited in a March 27 statement claiming that he had revoked 300 students'

vice. Various legal groups have suggested that the total is in the several thousands, so we expect our

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From our own reporting—and the barrage of tips we received in our inboxes and over social media—we know that there are many more colleges and universities that have not disclosed information on the status of their international students. Most of them are small, private liberal arts colleges with large international student populations.

Why a college would choose not to disclose data is not entirely clear. Some say they're protecting student identities; many are probably worried about the impact on future international student enrollment, which generates substantial tuition revenue for many institutions across the country.

At present, the database is mostly comprised of public regional or flagship colleges and universities. About 28 percent of the nearly 250 colleges are private. Additionally, the international student populations at the institutions vary, and the number of students affected doesn't always align.

The University of Michigan, for example, has more than 8,000 foreign students but only reported 22 revocations. Meanwhile, Pima Community College in Arizona has fewer than 200 and reported one revocation. But then there's Northwest Missouri State University, which had 716 international students as of October 2024 and reported 43 revocations.

As we scrape through individual student data in our set, about one-quarter of the 530 students analyzed so far have been identified as alumni, 8 percent as graduate students and 2 percent as undergraduates.

2 We don't know much about the students themselves

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have gathered comes from one of a few sources: the student themselves, someone at the college or university with access to SEVIS, or a legal filing or lawyer representing the student in a lawsuit. No public database exists that provides international student visa data.

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A few sources have disclosed more than just the number of students impacted; sometimes they share whether a student is currently enrolled or participating in Optional Practical Training—a program that allows F-1 visa holders to gain work experience related to their field of study—or OPT for STEM. Rarely do sources disclose the student's nation of origin.

Of the 515 students whose data we've reviewed for nationality information, 450 do not have their

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other nationalities.

One caveat: The higher numbers of Indian and Chinese students likely reflect their position as the top two countries of origin for foreign students enrolled at U.S. institutions. During the 2023–24 academic year, 331,602 Indian students and 277,398 Chinese students enrolled in postsecondary education in the U.S. By comparison, Canada sends roughly 28,000 students across the border each academic year.

3. This clearly isn't just about antisemitism.

Initially, the State Department said it was targeting students who sought entrance to the U.S. “not just to study but to participate in movements that vandalize universities, harass students, take over buildings, and cause chaos.”

Some of the students impacted by visa revocations have been prominent social activists, including Mahmoud Khalil and Mohsen Mahdawi from Columbia University, who participated in pro-Palestinian protests and an encampment in spring 2024.

Columbia is among the colleges on our list—along with Emerson College, George Washington University, New York University, Northwestern University, the New School, Tufts University, the University of Michigan, the University of Minnesota, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the University of Washington, Washington University in St. Louis and the

University of California, Berkeley, that saw large-scale campus protests and encampments this past

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Other campuses, however, saw little to no political engagement over the Israel-Hamas war. Webster University in St. Louis, for instance, had no noted examples of alleged antisemitism, yet 18 students had their visas revoked.

College officials say that several of the students affected weren't involved in campus protests or considered student activists.

4. Officials often cite criminal activity as the rationale for revoking student visas.

International students may lose their legal standing in the U.S. for failing to meet the terms of their F-1 visa, which include being enrolled as a full-time student, not working off campus during their first year, having enough money to support themselves and maintaining a residence abroad.

But a student's visa can also be revoked for more serious reasons, such as criminal activity, national security concerns, misrepresentation or fraud.

Some colleges and universities have said their students had visas revoked for past or minor crimes, including traffic violations, underage drinking and trespassing. Many of these cases were dismissed.

A growing number of students are suing the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security.

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record has been terminated.”

5. Courts will likely have the final say on revocations.

So far, *Inside Higher Ed* has identified 28 lawsuits representing 178 students who are asking federal courts to restore their status in SEVIS and/or their visas. Several students have secured temporary restraining orders that allow them to stay in the country while the litigation continues, and at least one student had their visa reinstated.

The federal government has argued in court filings that the lawsuits should be dismissed because terminating a student’s SEVIS record doesn’t mean their visa is revoked or constitute a final action. SEVIS, a government attorney wrote, is simply a database and does not “control or even necessarily reflect whether a student has lawful nonimmigrant status.”

But some students aren’t waiting for the courts to weigh in. At least five have left the country voluntarily, according to news reports. And others never got the chance to file suit before the federal government took action. Fewer than 10 students have been arrested, detained or deported.

We’re adding to our student-level database and continuing to update the map, so check back here for daily updates. As we learn more about those affected, we’ll share that data, too.

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